

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

Committee	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date:	27 January 2012
Title:	Marine Director's Current Issues
Reference:	3577
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report consists of a final draft of the proposed Strategic Vision, seeks approval to install three new navigation piles and a new navigation buoy, and addresses some issues regarding slipway ownership and improvements, and the provision of tender storage ashore and afloat.

2. Strategic Vision

- 2.1. Members of the Management Committee were asked to consult those whom they represent and provide feedback on the draft Strategic Vision to the Marine Director by 30 November 2011.
- 2.2. Feedback and comments were received from Hamble Parish Council (as submitted to Eastleigh Borough Council), The Association of River Hamble Yacht Clubs, and the Hamble River Boatyard and Marina Operators Association. A meeting of the sub-group took place on 13 December to discuss how best to incorporate the comments received and, as a result, a revised final draft is at Appendix 1.

3. Navigation buoys and piles

- 3.1. Following an internal review of the location and purpose of the navigation buoys and piles in the harbour, approval is sought to install three new piles and one additional buoy, as follows:
- a. Swanwick Bend. A new starboard hand marker pile is proposed, in the location shown (in yellow, for contrast) on the attached aerial photograph (Appendix 2). This will assist navigators who are unfamiliar with the harbour to negotiate the sharp turn to port on the approach to Swanwick Marina. Initially, this pile will be unlit, pending

consultations with Trinity House and local residents, but with the intention of fitting a green flashing light if possible. Estimated cost - £4000.

- b. Riverside Boatyard. A shallow mud bank extends north-eastwards from Riverside Boatyard, on the straight-line approach to the central span of the M27 bridge. Although recent survey data indicates that there has been little, if any, change in depths, this shallow patch has been the cause of a number of reported grounding incidents involving vessels approaching and leaving Eastland's Boatyard, upstream of the M27 bridge. A new small port-hand marker buoy is proposed, in the location shown in red on the attached aerial photograph (Appendix 3). The purpose of the buoy would be to encourage navigators to take a wide sweep around the bend to the north of Riverside Boatyard, thus avoiding the shallow bank. Estimated cost - £2000.
 - c. No 1 Pile. At present, there is a double pile at No 7 pile. The purpose of the double pile is to support a large sign which displays a 'welcome' notice, 6-knot speed limit, CCTV warning and VHF radio information. Anecdotal and visual evidence suggests that many skippers believe that this sign indicates the start of the six-knot, minimum wash limit which actually starts at No 1 pile, some three cables (600 yards) further to seaward. The proposal is to install two new tubular steel piles about 2.5 metres apart in the current location of No1 pile, so that an additional sign can be installed, clearly indicating where the speed limit starts. The existing sign on No 7 would remain in place, both as a reminder and to attract the attention of skippers entering the River from the north-west (down Southampton Water) who may not see the sign at No1 pile if they cut the corner. Estimated cost - £7000.
- 3.2. If approved, it is possible that the three piles can be driven at the same time as the Crown Estate pile replacement programme scheduled for February 2012, thereby saving on deployment costs for the piling barge, which will already be on site. Further, it is anticipated that the requirement at Swanwick Bend could be met by re-using one of the greenheart mooring piles which are scheduled for replacement by The Crown Estate, at a considerable cost saving. The proposed new No 1 piles require tubular steel piles (to replace the existing plastic), so that signage can be more robustly attached.

4. Slipway ownership

- 4.1. As requested by Board members at the previous meeting, enquiries have been made regarding the ownership of the concrete slipway at Hamble and the gravel slipway at Warsash.

- a) Hamble

The concrete slipway at Hamble lies on land/foreshore which is owned by Hamble Parish Council, although it lies within the jurisdiction of the Harbour Authority. It is about 55 metres in length and in generally good condition. It is regularly cleaned and maintained by the Parish

Council. It is wide enough throughout its length to facilitate launching and recovery of tenders and sailing dinghies, but not for launching or recovering larger vessels which require vehicular access (the gravel slipway adjacent to the Royal Southern Yacht Club is ideal for the latter purpose). It is long enough to allow launching or recovery at all but the lowest tides and has been widened with paving slabs at the low-water end. Its gradient is easily manageable, except, perhaps, for the largest and heaviest of sailing dinghies. Access to it is through the Hamble Parish Council dinghy compound which in turn is secured by a locked barrier. Access to the slipway is thus restricted to those boats with allocated spaces in the dinghy pound or can pass under the barrier (although the barrier is unlocked for events and open meetings). Costs to widen the slipway by 2 metres, throughout its length, have been estimated by an approved contractor at £85,000. To this must be added an estimated £4000 (non-returnable) to cover the costs of obtaining the necessary marine consents (with no guarantee of success).

b) Warsash

The gravel slipway at Warsash lies on land/foreshore which is owned by The Crown Estate but leased to Hampshire County Council. It is susceptible to large build-ups of weed which is cleared periodically by the County Council (except for the cobbled section adjacent to Shore Road which is the responsibility of Fareham Borough Council). The slipway is wide enough for at least two boats to launch or recover simultaneously, and long enough to allow launching and recovery at virtually all states of the tide (it is potentially risky to launch or recover larger vessels at extreme LW springs). Vehicular access for launching and recovering larger vessels is generally good, although an area of soft mud downstream from the compacted gravel area can catch the unwary. The gradient varies throughout the length of the slipway, with a level area at mid-tide which can make operations awkward. The slope gets progressively steeper towards the low water mark. The surface is firm but uneven and prone to puddles. It could benefit from resurfacing to adjust the gradients, fill the puddles and address the areas of soft mud. Costs for this would depend on the extent of the work undertaken and are thus difficult to estimate. Obtaining the necessary marine consents would be expensive, without any guarantee of success.

5. Tender storage

5.1. Board members have requested further information regarding the provision of tender storage space, both ashore and afloat.

a) Present situation. The mid-stream moorings are owned by The Crown Estate but the Harbour Authority provides limited tender storage facilities afloat on the public pontoons at Hamble (six spaces) and Warsash (eight spaces) for mid-stream mooring holders. These spaces are allocated by ballot at the Annual Forum each year. No

charge is made and owners are required to ensure that their tenders are properly secured, pumped out and fendered. The ballot is over subscribed by a ratio of about 2 to 1. The Harbour Authority does not provide any tender storage facilities ashore. Many of the mid-stream mooring holders who own tenders choose to keep them at one of the sailing clubs or the Hamble Parish Council dinghy compound, whilst others use the facilities provided by some marinas. Charges are made for all these facilities. Subject to Parish Council agreement, it may be possible to provide additional tender storage facilities in the Hamble Parish Council dinghy compound by building a storage rack to enable tenders to be stored one above another. There is limited space available at Swanwick, on land owned by Fareham Borough Council. A major weakness of the existing tender storage provision is that most of it is in the lower reaches of the harbour, necessitating long transits to moorings further up the River. Alternatives to tenders are provided by Club launches and the Water Taxi.

- b) Tender storage afloat – options. The 14 spaces currently provided by the Harbour Authority is the sensible maximum using the existing pontoons, whilst still allowing some space for berthing tenders to visiting yachts. Space to build new pontoons for this purpose is severely limited and, ideally, any such project would be further upstream than the existing pontoons. Proposals would require adequate access and car parking space.
- c) Tender storage ashore – options. Hampshire County Council owns a great deal of riparian land on the Hamble and it may be possible to identify an area which could be set aside for tender storage, although access and car parking requirements could make this difficult.

6. Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that the River Hamble Harbour Board:

- i. Adopts and publishes the Strategic Vision; and**
- ii. Approves and funds the proposals for new navigation marks and signage.**
- iii. Notes the issues pertaining to slipway ownership and improvement, and tender storage.**

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. A full Equalities Impact Assessment for the River Hamble Harbour Authority's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code has been carried out and this report does not raise any issues not previously covered by that Assessment.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. This report does not deal with any issues relating to crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? The contents of this report have no impact on carbon footprint or energy consumption because the proposed navigation lights will be solar powered.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? Not applicable to this report.

The Strategic Vision for the future of the River Hamble

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The River Hamble is a popular waterway and harbour with a unique history and a diverse range of uses. Hampshire County Council (HCC) is the statutory Harbour Authority (River Hamble Harbour Authority (RHHA)). The Harbour Board, advised and scrutinised by the Management Committee, is appointed by HCC as the governing body to ensure that the RHHA fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The Harbour Board wishes to provide clear leadership and direction for all interested parties, including the three riparian local authorities, to achieve a universally agreed approach to the evolution of the harbour.
- 1.2 This Strategic Vision seeks to meet the aspirations of all those users who have an interest in the future prosperity of the River Hamble, be it commercial, recreational or environmental.

2. Background

- 2.1 The role of the Harbour Authority is to manage, maintain and improve¹ the River Hamble harbour. There have been previous attempts to set out medium to long-term plans for the future of the River Hamble, but these have tended to be over-prescriptive and, for practical reasons, have not withstood the test of time. Whilst the Harbour Authority is not the planning authority for the River Hamble – this role falls to the three riparian authorities (Eastleigh, Fareham and Winchester) – nonetheless, it should play a key role in defining the harbour's future, primarily by considering and determining consent for harbour works.
- 2.2 The Harbour is limited by statute to the Mean High Water Mark. However, its full enjoyment is dependent on the relationship with adjoining land uses and so its true non-statutory extent may be said to be all that land which supports and sustains the Harbour activities.
- 2.3 For clarity, the Harbour Board has no desire to extend either its statutory jurisdiction or its statutory responsibilities.

3. Vision

- 3.1 The Harbour Board's Vision is to conserve the natural beauty, character and history of the harbour, while taking account of the needs of the many people who use it. The Board will seek to provide a safe, enjoyable harbour that is

¹ Harbours Act 1964

accessible to as many people as possible. There is a clear desire to balance peoples' diverse enjoyment with the level of activity and usage. There is also a clear commitment to understand the commercial and recreational demands placed on this busy waterway and to maintain a balance between them.

- 3.2 The Vision is not a plan – but it is a starting point and a statement of shared values and intent. It aims to take a pro-active approach to the evolution of the harbour, as a centre for a wide range of recreation, as an economic hub and as a site of environmental importance. It seeks to avoid being over prescriptive and, to that end, stops short of setting out detailed proposals for future development activity. It is intended, however, that this Vision will help to guide the Harbour Board when considering future applications for Harbour Works Consent. It is also intended to be a living document – comment and feedback are welcome and it will be subject to regular review. A measure of its success will be its adoption by a wide range of interested parties as the primary reference by which proposals for change can be fairly judged.
- 3.3 The Harbour Board will seek to maintain the visual balance of the harbour, with its panoramic views. It will also seek to influence local planning authorities and developers to find a balance between contemporary design and conservation of the quintessential character of the harbour. The Board has expressed a firm commitment that, within the Harbour Authority's jurisdiction, it will not permit any further marina or boatyard development north of the currently consented extent of Eastland's Boatyard.
- 3.4 There has been some disquiet among harbour users and other interested parties about the cumulative effects of river development. This is due, in part, to the increasing diversity of harbour users and a perceived increase in congestion, but also stems from the lack of a vision to guide future development activity. There is a clear requirement for a process that is seen to be transparent in safeguarding the river and its amenities, and in balancing user needs and entitlements, be they environmental, recreational or commercial. As a finite resource, the harbour requires careful husbandry to ensure that it is sustainable as a thriving centre for a diverse range of marine activity.
- 3.5 In support of this Vision, an inter-active multi-layer mapping system has been created which depicts key aspects of the harbour and surrounding area to demonstrate how diverse marine activities currently co-exist, and could be used in the future as a tool to assist in highlighting areas of conflicting interest and identifying where opportunities may arise to improve the environment and facilities. It depicts the situation as it is today but can be easily updated as changes occur in the future.

4. The Harbour Board's objectives are to:

4.1 Maintain Safety

4.1.1. Safety within the harbour is the primary responsibility of the Harbour Board (as Duty Holder for the Port Marine Safety Code). The Board seeks to:

- ensure that all users feel safe, and are safe, on the water;

- ensure that all users understand and respect the needs of other users;
- accommodate the diverse range of craft currently found in and around the Harbour;
- ensure that appropriate navigation channels are available to meet their needs, whether in terms of depth, width, accessibility, shelter or crossing places, and;
- provide relevant information on safety which can be widely disseminated to harbour users.

The Harbour Board recognises the importance of safety for sailing dinghies and other small craft in the harbour and will seek to ensure the preservation of safe areas for these activities. The Board will also encourage the safe use of the harbour by children and, where possible, provide access for the disabled.

4.2 Preserve and enhance the harbour's environment.

4.2.1. The Harbour Board will ensure its compliance with appropriate environmental legislation. In carrying out its statutory functions, it must have regard to nature conservation, water quality, waste management and heritage features. Thus, protection of the precious environment of the harbour is a key aspect of the Harbour Authority's statutory responsibilities. It is vital that the protected habitats such as salt marsh and intertidal mud be conserved in order to perform their natural functions such as sea defence and support a range of species of flora and fauna. The rural aspect of the upper reaches of the River should remain as such to be enjoyed by future generations. The Board is aware of the possible impact of climate change and sea-level rise, and will continue to recognise, monitor and raise awareness of the potential effects upon the harbour. The Board also recognises that maintenance dredging and, occasionally, capital dredging is necessary to maintain navigable depths for access and to safeguard useable waterways.

4.3 Ensure commercial and recreational balance.

4.3.1. The Hamble is a busy recreational harbour and is widely recognised as an important boating centre, appealing to owners of vessels of all types, including racing and cruising yachts, motor cruisers, kayaks, canoes, rowing boats and sailing dinghies. Other, new, water-based activities may also become popular in the future. Furthermore, the river is popular for fishing, bird-watching, dog-walking, swimming and simply 'sitting and watching'. It is a vibrant and important commercial location, with businesses offering almost every boating service, adding millions of pounds and many employment opportunities to the local economy. The harbour's recreational activity is vital for the survival of these businesses, and conversely without the businesses, many recreational boat owners would be forced to invest and spend elsewhere, or perhaps choose other recreational alternatives. Thus, it is imperative that a balance is maintained to ensure that businesses, investment and employment can thrive alongside the demands of all recreational activity.

4.3.2 The Harbour Board understands the great importance of the marine businesses around the harbour and will seek to provide support for the appropriate infrastructure so that economic and employment benefits are realised into the future. These businesses include large commercial marinas, smaller specialist boat yards, mooring providers/maintainers, yacht clubs, specialist engineering and support businesses, and those services such as local shops, pubs and amenities, the water taxi, ferry and river bus, which enable both boat owners/users and non-boat owners to have access to and experience the water. The Harbour Board will encourage marine businesses around the harbour and will continue to be flexible, open to change and adaptable to the diverse demands of harbour users in the future.

4.3.3. The Harbour Board recognises the equal importance of the harbour as a recreational resource. The harbour has something to offer across a wide range of recreational activities. The Board believes that the harbour should continue to meet this recreational demand and will seek to ensure that such activities can take place safely and with the minimum of conflict between users or negative impact on the natural environment. Ensuring that there is sufficient space for recreational activity is important but the Board also recognises the need to balance this against demand for an appropriate distribution of moorings and berths so that the full range of activities may take place safely.

4.4 Ensure our financial future

4.4.1. The Harbour Authority forms part of Hampshire County Council, but it is largely self funding (mainly through the collection of Harbour Dues, plus fees for services and consents). The Harbour Authority is a 'not-for-profit' organisation and the Board is committed to ensuring that any surplus is re-invested in the infrastructure of the harbour.

4.5 Respond to future demand

4.5.1. There are considerable pressures upon the Harbour Authority and a great deal of competition for space within the harbour. In balancing future demand, the Harbour Board will seek to preserve public access to the harbour for all types of recreation (with appropriate restrictions to ensure safety of navigation and environmental protection). It will work with local planning authorities to maintain access to the shoreline for non-boat users, and seek to encourage the provision of facilities for non-boating visitors where appropriate.

4.5.2. The Harbour Board aspires to manage the space available for all categories of harbour users, and to give due consideration to 'zoning' of activities where practicable. Optimal use of space may involve the clearing of moorings from specific areas, but the Harbour Board accepts that moorings elsewhere will almost certainly need to be reconfigured or expanded to accommodate displaced boats. The Board will, where necessary, seek the agreement of The Crown Estate to do this. Competition for space is not limited to the water and the Board recognises the importance of facilities for

car and trailer parking, and will maintain a dialogue with local planning authorities to encourage the provision of adequate parking. The Board wishes to encourage access to river facilities for boat owners of all means.

5. Engagement and consensus building

- 5.1 The Vision is for a harbour where there is a shared understanding between all the individuals and groups who use it. The Harbour Board is committed to building consensus between these individuals and groups. In turn, the Harbour Management Committee will continue to consult through its Members the groups they represent and will advise the Board where wider consultation is required. Consultation and engagement will be open and accessible where possible. The Board will also work to disseminate information about the harbour, how it is managed and operates, its history and environment, so as to inform local communities and build mutual ownership of this valuable resource. To this end, the Board seeks to encourage a more 'joined-up' approach to planning and development in the harbour, working in cooperation with the local planning authorities and other interested parties.
- 5.2 This Strategic Vision is intended to be a 'living' document. It will be reviewed, modified and updated to reflect and guide the evolving needs of the river and aspirations of its users.